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S P E E C H

OF

ON. A. W. HARRIS,

OF WRENTHAM,

DELIVERED IN

The House of Representatives of Massachusetts,

ON

THE LICENSE BILL THEN PENDING.

THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 1874.

BOSTON:

WRIGHT & POTTER, STATE PRINTERS,
CORNER OF MILK AND FEDERAL STREETS.

1874.

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S P E E C H.

MR. SPEAKER :

As a member of the Liquor Committee, and a friend to the present Prohibitory Law, I esteem it a duty as well as a pleasure to lift my voice in its behalf, and oppose, with all my strength, the passage of the bill now before the House.

A few weeks ago, signs of mourning were seen in our midst, and the sad news was communicated of the sudden demise of a familiar friend. The mourners went about the streets and refused to be comforted. Scarce had we ceased to regret what seemed to be unavoidable, when, lo ! again appears before our startled gaze the well-known features of the dear departed, restored to life and animation. The dread ceremonies of the tomb are cast aside, and the revived spirit walks forth in all its pristine vigor, at once the delight of its parent, and the hope and pride of its distinguished godfather,—the Honorable Judiciary Committee.

Well we know the object of this resuscitation, and recognize the signal for battle. The dead license-law project has been galvanized into life, and the repeal of the present prohibitory law has been determined upon.

The present proposition is to enact a license law, and thereby legalize the traffic in intoxicating liquors. Being convinced that any legislation tending to admit the legality and respectability of a traffic that is causing so much misery and crime throughout our land, is dangerous and wrong, I feel it my duty as a citizen and a member of this legislature earnestly and fearlessly to oppose such legislation.

I fully appreciate my position at this time, sir, and assure the House it is only a strong sense of duty that prompts my action and nerves me to the task of confronting those ponderous batteries of eloquence and sophistry that will be concentrated upon the advocates of the prohibitory law to sweep them to destruction. I can see in my mind's eye the handsome form of the honorable member from the Seventh Suffolk, as, with characteristic self-possession he rises in his seat, glances for an instant at the ladies' gallery, and then launches his thunderbolts upon me. Scarce has the shock of

his terrific onslaught passed away, when, in the distance, appears the agile form of the eloquent and soul-stirring member from Roxbury. Springing to his feet, and pointing his finger with terrible significance, he proceeds to crush me to atoms with his vehement and bewildering oratory. I can see my quick-witted friend and neighbor, the honorable member from the Fifth Suffolk, rise at my side, and actuated solely by a sense of duty to his noble constituency, level his double-shotted Columbiad to demolish me. Well can I exclaim in the language of the immortal Cæsar, when the gleaming dagger pierced his flesh, "*Et tu Brute.*" But, Mr. Speaker, doubly fortified by the justice of my cause, I shall dare to give public utterance to my honest convictions upon this great and important question, and risk the awful encounter.

Mr. Speaker, I propose to examine as briefly as possible the character of the present prohibitory law, its workings, and the necessity for its retention.

I shall also consider some of the objections to it, as well as some of the arguments in favor of a license law.

I maintain and assert the following propositions as my platform of principles:—

1. That the traffic in intoxicating beverages is a crime.
2. That a prohibitory law is required as well for a statute of moral authority as for a means for the suppression of the crime.
3. A license law is a recognition of the legality of the crime which only tends to its increase.

Now, sir, can it be denied that intemperance is the greatest evil of the present age?

I claim that it is the moral curse and ruin of a great part of the world. It has countless victims, steeped in the most horrible misery, in all classes of society. It is a crime that destroys both soul and body; a crime not only against the individual whom it brings to the lowest degradation of manhood and the most terrible of deaths, but it is a crime against the family, against society, against God. What shall we say of a traffic that is the prolific source of all this misery, crime and degradation? Is it one to be fostered and encouraged by law, or discountenanced and prohibited?

There *is*, there *can* be, but one answer.

The great and good of all civilized lands have united in denouncing the traffic in intoxicating liquors, as detrimental to the best interests of society, and demand its suppression. Even in heathen India, the people clamor for its suppression. A monster petition, signed by 16,200 persons, was recently presented to the Viceroy, protesting against the rum traffic, and suggesting as practical measures of reform the closing of all liquor shops.

But, sir, the conviction is not a new one, nor confined entirely to the present age. Long centuries ago, wise nations became convinced that the unrestrained use of alcoholic liquors was subversive of morality and religion, and tended to sap the foundation of all law and good government.

Ever since the art of distillation became known, the world has bemoaned its first-born and demoralizing offspring, *alcohol*. In the ninth century the use of wine became more generally known on the continent of Europe, and to use the expressive language of the historian, "hand in hand with other vices, itself the head and front, drunkenness degenerated the church and accomplished the decline of the morals of the people."

I quote from a letter addressed to the chairman of the state board of health by O'Carlheim Guilenstein, chief of the statistical office of the department of justice in Sweden. "In the latter half of the fifteenth century, distilled spirit first became known in the country, and the use of it as a beverage gave the Regent occasion, as early as 1494, to issue a prohibition against it. These prohibitions were several times afterward proclaimed by the great social reformer, Gustavus Vasa. His son and successor, King John III., again permitted distillation, after which, it was not long before the abuse of it spread. Gustavus Adolphus, subsequently, was induced to prohibit the sale of ardent spirits," etc. The writer, after going on to give the different fluctuations of the laws of Sweden from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century, winds up with the assertion "that a vigorously maintained prohibition against spirits proved the enormous benefits produced in moral, economical, and other effects by abstinence," and, adds Mr. Aldrich, one of the worthy members of our state board of health, "Thus, the nation rose and fell, grew prosperous and happy, miserable and degraded, as its law-makers restrained, or permitted, the manufacture and sale of that which, all along the track of its history, has seemed to be the nation's curse." To show in what estimation the traffic was held by our forefathers, I will refer to the action of the Massachusetts Colony in 1646, who declared, "Forasmuch as drunkenness is a vice to be abhorred of all nations, especially of those who hold out and profess the gospel of Jesus Christ, and *seeing any strict law will not prevail unless the cause be taken away*, it is therefore ordered by this court, that no merchant, cooper or any other person whatever shall, after the first day of the first month, sell any wine under one-quarter cask, etc., under penalty of ten pounds."

Thus, we see that the demon of intemperance hovered over the track of the sturdy Pilgrim, as he sought refuge from persecution

upon the rock-bound coast of our own Plymouth, and pursued his errand of death.

From that time down to within about two decades, constant attempts have been made by license laws of every description and degree of stringency to abate the evils of intemperance and restrict the traffic in intoxicating beverages. Every effort has been futile; all, complete and ridiculous failures.

The alarming spread of the vice, at length forced the public mind to the conviction that nothing short of prohibitory legislation would effect relief. Firm in the belief that it was absolutely necessary to supplement and accompany moral suasion with legal enactment, the people of our sister State placed a prohibitory law upon their statute books. This law, with slight alterations, has stood the test of time, and to-day the beneficial results to the Pine Tree State can be seen in its improved morals, its mercantile prosperity and in the general good order and intelligence of its citizens. Notwithstanding the untruthful defenders of the rum interest assert that the law has done no good, and that more liquor is drank under it than before its enactment, I claim, and can prove, that the traffic in Maine is not one-tenth as large as formerly, or before the prohibitory law was enacted. Who is there so bold as to dispute the assertions or question the integrity and judgment of those prominent officials and citizens of Maine, who unhesitatingly declare that the prohibitory law has been a blessing, and productive of the most gratifying results? Are the protestations of nearly one hundred of the most distinguished and revered citizens of the State not to be regarded as good evidence of the working of the law? Perhaps those persons who recklessly assert that the prohibitory law is a failure *everywhere*, had better stand up, pigmies as they are, and dispute such men as J. G. Blaine, the talented speaker of our national house of representatives, Lot M. Morrell, Wm. P. Frye, Hannibal Hamlin, John Lynch, Peters, Hale, governors, mayors, city officers, state officials, ministers, and other prominent citizens of Maine. Perhaps the wiseacres of Boston are ready to assert that the mayors of Portland do not know what they are talking about, when they certify that (I quote their own language) "Many persons with the best means of judging, believe that the liquor traffic is not one-tenth as large as formerly. We content ourselves with saying, that the diminution of the trade is very great, and the favorable effects of the policy of prohibition are manifest to the most casual observer." Signed, Benjamin Kingsbury, W. W. Thomas, Augustus Stevens, J. J. McCobb and Jacob McLellan.

These gentlemen are men of experience in municipal affairs, truthful, far-sighted men, whose word and judgment would be apt to

be regarded as soon as that of these distinguished individuals who make day and night hideous with their howls about the failure of the prohibitory law. But how is it with this Commonwealth? for the battle is here on our own ground. Are we any different from the people of Maine? Do the citizens of Massachusetts claim that they are more moral, or higher minded, any better able to control themselves without law than the citizens of their sister State? If, after twenty years' trial in Maine, prohibition has reduced the liquor traffic ninety per cent., has diminished crime in a corresponding degree, has elevated the morals of the people, and continues to exert the same good influence, why would it not be proper to claim that it is a good law in Massachusetts, notwithstanding the barefaced assertions to the contrary of the liquor dealers of Boston and their subsidized organs?

But, Mr. Speaker, we have indubitable proof within our own borders that our good old Commonwealth has felt the beneficial effects of this wholesome law. Go to the country towns, see the thrift that prevails. Not one-half the liquor drank that used to be when license laws made the business respectable. Order and sobriety are maintained, where, during the year of license, it was one carnival of drunkenness and crime. "But," says one, "you can get all the liquor you want *now* in the country." I answer, that while one may be able to get all he wants by sending to the cities, or dodging into some hole in the ground, or into the cellar or back room of some disreputable householder, yet many who would drink at a licensed saloon have still some pride left that would restrain them from frequenting those low, out-of-the-way places. The desire to drink is lessened by the removal of the temptation and the presence of a healthy public sentiment. The prohibitory law is the offspring of public opinion, and, like a filial child, strengthens and sustains its parent.

Again, the prohibitory law is a statute of moral authority, and is to be regarded as an authoritative declaration of what good men consider to be right, though obedience to it may not be strictly enforced.

Said a gentlemen to me, a few days since: "I employ thirty hands, and at this time am scarcely ever troubled by reason of their drunkenness. A few years ago it was a common occurrence, and a majority of them would lose, on an average, one day every fortnight, by reason of their drinking habits. I used to pay orders to rumsellers to the amount of three dollars per week per man, and now it is almost unheard of, and very little drunkenness prevails." A similiar state of affairs exists in most of the country towns and villages.

What are the results in the city of Boston? It is claimed that intemperance is on the increase, and corruption and vice, fostered and encouraged by the present prohibitory law, are degenerating our people and bringing ruin upon us. *Ergo*, the law is a failure. Let us see whether the facts bear out the assertion.

Chief Savage in his report for year 1873, page 60 of city document No. 7, says: "The number of places where intoxicating liquors are now sold in the city, is reported by the police captains to be 2,427; some 300 less than last year, and about 500 less than the year before. The average number of persons arrested for drunkenness during the last four years is about ten per cent. more than the average of six former years, not having kept pace with the increase of population by about 22 per cent., and the arrests from the same cause during 1872 and 1873, are about ten per cent. less than in 1870 and 1871, showing an actual decrease in drunkenness during the past two years, notwithstanding the steady increase in population during that period." This report is for the year 1873, ending December 21st. By the testimony of that gallant soldier and honored citizen, Commissioner Bates, we find by a careful census of this city, just completed, the number of places where intoxicating liquors are sold is not over 1,600. He adds, that the city officers are taking a census for the same purpose, and as the persons employed in the work have the same means of information, it is fair to presume that the accounts will agree.

With such a showing, who can deny the efficacy of the present prohibitory law, or reasonably claim that it is a failure? Those who pronounce the law a failure seem to forget that the present times are fraught with unusual temptations, and that unusual difficulties have met the friends of temperance during the last few years, and if there had been no diminution of drinking houses, or no fewer arrests for drunkenness, the fact of there having been no increase would be sufficient evidence of the glorious success of the law.

With the demoralizing effects of the war upon the habits of the people, the consequent mania for speculation, the extravagance and dissipation engendered by fortunes suddenly acquired and as suddenly lost, ought it not to be a source of congratulation to the citizens of Massachusetts, that she has even held in check the monster vice that always follows so closely in the train of such exciting and demoralizing causes? Yes, Mr. Speaker, New England has reason to rejoice that she to-day stands so far ahead of other portions of the Union in point of good order, sobriety, intelligence, and wholesome laws, and it is a source of congratulation to-day, that most of the New England States have adopted prohibition, which has tended

in an eminent degree to help maintain that exalted position, and let her heed well that she does not turn back upon her path.

Sir, I may be pardoned for referring to myself or my experiences. I have resided during one period of my somewhat eventful life in the far off land of California, and in referring to the institutions and characteristics of New England, the land of my nativity, the home of my boyhood, I am reminded of the varied experiences of a fourteen years' sojourn in that famous El Dorado. I am painfully reminded of some of its striking and disagreeable features; with but the form of law, and that only in two or three of its principal cities, it staggered along for years under its crushing load of lawlessness, intemperance and crime; no one was safe within its borders. The robber and assassin stood at your door in open daylight and demanded your money or your life. The purity of the ballot-box was destroyed, and all was anarchy and dire confusion. It was then that the terrible necessity of the "Vigilance Committee" was made apparent, and the long suffering and now thoroughly aroused populace arose in their terrible might, and death marked the pathway of the vengeance of an outraged community.

He who has witnessed such scenes, can well appreciate the blessings of a quiet New England life, under her good and wholesome laws. He who has seen the rum-demon clutch and throttle his victims one by one, from his own loved circle of friends; he who has seen the gleaming knife driven to the hilt into the quivering flesh of a dear friend by a boon companion for an insult, given while under the influence of wine, can hardly fail to appreciate the good old temperance laws and notions of New England, or to value a home within her borders. All this have I seen, and more, and with the lessons of the past before my eyes, I am fully warranted in claiming for this Commonwealth, the home of my adoption, the most exalted position among her sister States of the Union.

Let no one charge that the prohibitory law is not essentially a success, nor affirm that it has not assisted in securing her this proud preëminence. But who are the persons who sing the well-worn, tiresome song, that prohibition is a failure? Let me classify them. The distinguished gentleman who presides at a North Street variety booth and victualling cellar; he who, with glassy and bloodshot eyes, watches the drunken orgies, and deals out the scientifically prepared "food," or (to use the high-flown language of those who advocate the use of alcohol as food) "the nutritious and narcotic stimuli to dietetic alimentation." Fully appreciating the evil effects of this cursed prohibitory law, this bloated demon of vice mutters curses between his set teeth as the officer comes to arrest him, and declares the law a failure.

The saloon-keeper of Washington Street, as he stands behind the elegantly ornamented bar, adorned with silver service of elaborate workmanship, who, with stolid countenance and hardened heart, dispenses "food" to his more fashionable victims, will, with a sneer, declare the law a farce and a failure. The gentlemanly rumsellers of our first-class hotels; these *pets* of Boston, whose success is so necessary to its growth and mercantile prosperity; these fashionable law-breakers, whose commitment to prison for violation of law would cause civil war and bloodshed, all reëcho the cry that the law is a failure. The politician who rejoices in a lucrative office,—secured to him by the efforts of that glorious constituency, as represented by the frequenters of the rum-hells of North Street on the one hand, and those who patronize the fashionable and first-class hotels of Washington, Tremont and School Streets on the other,—he, in response to the demands of those who made him and can unmake him, cries out with alacrity, "Prohibition is a failure." The old worn-out aspirant for political honors, after a life spent in tricks, deceptions, drinking and dissipation, no vitality to restore the wasted tissues of his body, and with a morbid craving for stimulant, willingly accepts the advice (oftentimes demanded) of his physician, to use alcoholic drinks, and as he tremblingly quaffs the exhilarating fluid, shrugs his shoulders and wisely exclaims, "Necessary article," and "Prohibition is a sad failure." All these, from the highest to the lowest, join in the cry that prohibition is a failure, and, by their almost superhuman exertions to accomplish the repeal of the law, give the lie to the assertion.

But, Mr. Speaker, there is another class,—good and true men, men of principle, temperance men, and there may be many within the sound of my voice,—who think the prohibitory law a failure. While I believe them to be honest in their opinions, I do not wonder that they entertain such opinions, in view of the deceptions that are resorted to by the enemies of prohibition to break down the law. When I see a public press, and there are some noted and honorable exceptions, owned by and run in the interest of rumsellers and rum-drinkers, circulating its garbled statements abroad over our State, ridiculing the earnest efforts of the faithful men and women who are striving to eradicate intemperance, pauperism and crime from our land; when I see such persistent efforts by the public press to create false impressions to subserve the interests of rumsellers, I do not wonder that good men are deceived. No, Mr. Speaker, I only wonder that more are not deceived and led away by the voice of that false syren who lulls to a fatal sleep. When, from day to day, I look over the city papers and notice their studious efforts to conceal whatever facts are elicited at the hear-

ings of the liquor committee, tending to prove the efficiency of the prohibitory law, of the commissioners and state police; when I notice the avidity with which the same journals seize upon and give prominence to every word uttered in disparagement of the law and the officers engaged in its execution, I do not wonder that the community are deceived. Is this the high-minded and honorable journalism that elevates the masses and creates a pure moral sentiment in the community? Can good men and women be much longer deceived by these servile creatures of a rumocracy, these sycophantic scribblers, who "crook the pregnant hinges of the knee, that thrift may follow fawning"? For myself, Mr. Speaker, I despise such proceedings, such deceptions, and pity from the very depths of my soul the unfortunate individuals who are deceived by them. Let the deceived ones ponder these facts, and come out from among the cold-hearted throng who have not the welfare of the people at heart, and only work for gain. "Oh, sordid love of gold, when for thy sake the fool throws up his interests in both worlds. First starved in this, then damned in that to come."

And what has been offered by the advocates of license to prove their oft-repeated assertions that prohibition is a failure? At one of the hearings of the liquor committee within a few weeks, the now notorious William A. Simmons, then supervisor of the revenue, was brought forward, with a great flourish of trumpets, by the young attorney with a green bag, said to be employed by the Brewer Reuter. This Reuter did not want to be considered a criminal, but, boasted that more beer was sold during the time that the city authorities ordered the liquor shops closed, upon the occasion of the great fire, than for the same time before or since.

This Simmons was brought forward, with his books, to prove that the number of rum-shops had increased in 1872, and consequently the report of Chief Savage was a misstatement. He (Simmons) stated that about 3,200 licenses had been granted, or that the government had received tribute from 3,200 persons during the year 1872 in the city of Boston. Look at the unblushing effrontery of this distinguished individual, that Boston has had thrust upon her against the wishes of her most respectable merchants and responsible citizens. This bold man, this Christian soldier, failed to tell the committee that the number did not represent the different *places* where liquor was sold, but gave us to understand that such was the case, in order to prove that the traffic had increased, and not decreased, as Chief Savage reported from 2,700 to 2,400 saloons during the year 1872. We were led to infer, and the inferences were appropriated by the opponents of the law, that 3,200 liquor shops were in existence, but it turned out that there were several succes-

sive proprietors to each saloon; that extra licenses were granted to the uncles, cousins, and relatives to the third and fourth degree of those saloon keepers who had been once prosecuted, and feared to risk the clutches of the law on a second offence, and a half-dozen of them may have been taken out for the same place. How is this for the honest opponents of the prohibitory law, who claim it a failure, and support the claim by such disgraceful means?

Again, at one of our hearings, the heroic defender of this would-be respectable traffic, who "once advocated temperance from principle, but now defends rum for money," the brave pettifogger was present, with his ubiquitous green bag crammed with important statistics, consisting mainly of letters from police judges from the different cities of the State. It seems he had taken especial pains to obtain reports of the number of arrests for drunkenness for the past few years in those cities, in order to calculate the percentage of increase in drunkenness in those places, as a basis for his erroneous assertion that the percentage of increase of drunkenness was greater than the percentage of increase of population in the whole Commonwealth. Having made selection of a dozen or so reports showing such increase, he proceeded to read them, and with a great flourish blatantly proclaimed to the committee and an admiring crowd of sympathizers that this was the result of our disgraceful prohibitory law. And as his cheek glowed with pride at the approving glances and marks of approbation of his friends, he launched forth his thunderbolts of defiance against any who should dare execute the law in the city of Boston. This, sir, is about the substance of all the evidence that was brought forward to establish the failure of the prohibitory law, although hours were taken up in depicting the immense amount of bribery and corruption that existed in the force engaged in its execution. We were told that on account of the peculiar character of the law, no officer of the force could keep honest, and for that reason, if no other, they demanded its repeal; that it corrupted the courts, demoralized the juries, clogged the wheels of justice, outraged the moral sentiment of the community, and should be stricken from the statute books of the Commonwealth. Sir, is it possible that such false assertions, such flimsy arguments, such distorted reports, can be of any weight in the minds of a thoughtful and intelligent people?

What says General Bates, the chairman of the board of police commissioners? "We have as honest and effective a force of state police as can be found in the whole country, and they are nobly doing their duty. We have weeded out the dishonest members, and at this time the machinery is working splendidly. The members of the board are in sympathy and hearty coöperation, and we

are driving the rumsellers into their holes, where, if we cannot get them out any other way, we will smoke them out." The commissioner further says, "I believe in the prohibitory law, with all my heart. I believe it is doing more good than anything else to stay the progress of drunkenness, and, notwithstanding the obstacles thrown in the way of its enforcement, has done and is doing a vast deal of good in the community. Do not," says the commissioner, "repeal a law that has just reached the point of its greatest effectiveness." Other distinguished witnesses at our committee hearings testified to the beneficial effects of the law, and the facts elicited have been overwhelmingly in favor of its continuance. "But," says one, "I like no interference with my liberty," and he proudly quotes John Stuart Mill, who says, "All laws are wrong that would deprive any man from exercising his social rights"; that the right to take a glass of liquor is a mere personal consideration, the mere exercise of a social right, that no legislation can control or prevent.

To this I answer, in the language of the same distinguished authority: "Whenever there is a definite damage or definite risk of damage, either to the individual or to the public, the case is taken out of the province of liberty and placed in that of morality or law." Does the admirer of Stuart Mill adopt all of his idol's ideas, and join him in his condemnation of all sabbatarian legislation, all legislation against gambling and fornication? Another exclaims, that drinking or selling liquor is not a crime, *per se*. But we reply that this has no pertinancy when applied to the use or sale of what does a positive injury to one's self or the public. There is no *per se* about it. But, sir, it is unnecessary to reiterate the arguments of those who oppose prohibition, or spend time in refuting them. It is to me clear that the majority of those who oppose the prohibitory law are striving to justify themselves in a wrong, and for this paltry purpose are willing to sacrifice the best interests of society. It is claimed by a great many persons, that even admitting there was need of this law, and that it did cause a diminution of drunkenness, yet it costs too much by way of corruption, and American citizens would not be *driven*. "It might do under a despotic government, or in country towns, but not in large cities of America." Sir, Massachusetts pays too much for her prisons and poor-houses to be told by any one that she must not spend a little money in the enforcement of a prohibitory law,—a law to prevent the expenditure of a thousand times larger amount in the care of the criminals and paupers furnished by the infamous rum traffic. The odium of such a law, of which many of the leading papers of Boston stand in dread, is in proportion to the drunkenness and demoralization that require it, and which would disappear were the law properly en-

forced. I can well understand why the prominent opposition papers of Boston should wish to throw discredit upon a prohibitory law ; but why cover opposition to it with the contradictory and untenable assumption that it is not needed, and if it were, cannot be enforced? We are called upon to repeal the present law and enact a license law, a permissive law, or a local option law. What is there to choose between them? They all mean respectability to the traffic in intoxicating drinks ; and, as I stated in the outset, I am opposed to any and all license laws. For two hundred years the experiment has been tried without success. It has been a miserable failure and tended to increase the evils of intemperance rather than diminish them. And why not? With the direct sanction of the law the traffic becomes respectable and intrudes its filthy presence into every community, while ruin and desolation mark its pathway throughout the land. How was it with the attempt in St. Louis, three years since, to regulate the social evil by license? It was asserted that a license law, with restrictive provisions, would mitigate and diminish the evil. It was claimed that upon sanitary considerations it would be of benefit to the community and bring revenue to the government. Sir, did it accomplish the desired result? Did it do what was promised for it? No, sir, it had a directly opposite result.

Houses of prostitution that before sought refuge from the gaze of an enlightened and virtuous community, and shrank from sight in unfrequented streets and dark alleys, came out brazen-faced and defiant. Protected by law, the foul business spread, and was carried on in marble fronts in the most conspicuous places. Temptations were placed, far and near, to draw the youth and the unwary into the seething vortex of corruption. The result can be easily imagined :

“ Vice is a monster of such hideous mien,
That to be hated needs but to be seen ;
But seen too oft familiar with its face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.”

The experiment has proved an ignominious failure. An outraged community rose in their indignation and swept away the innovation—just as the good people of this Commonwealth will do a license liquor law, if it is forced upon them by the schemes and money of the liquor dealers. It may be true that license men are in the majority in this legislature, but if so it is morally certain that it is not a fair representation of the true sentiments of Massachusetts upon this subject. It may be that the friends of temperance have depended too much upon the law to do the work without their active aid in its execution. It may be that our enemies have

stolen a march upon us, and have packed this legislature for its overthrow. But, sir, let them beware how they trifle with the feelings of the people. Let Boston take heed lest she in the fulness of her pride and power give herself into the hands of a depraved and besotted element, that would deprive her of her glory and renown, and lead her down to destruction. Let her beware how she yields to the fascinations of that fiend who would tear down her bulwarks of safety and make her noble institutions of charity, learning and religion a mockery and a by-word. Sir, this is no idle warning, for just so sure as she persists in her attempts to set at naught good and wholesome laws at the dictation of the rabble, who would ignore all law, just so sure will the day of trouble be upon her, and the fate of Troy be hers. Listen to the prophecy :—

“That day shall come, that great avenging day,
When Troy’s proud ruins in the dust shall lay;
When Priam’s power and Priam’s self shall fall,
And one o’erwhelming ruin cover all.”

I call upon the members of this legislature to stand by the prohibitory law and set their seal of condemnation upon any efforts to deprive the families of this Commonwealth of the only protection they have against the evils of the liquor traffic. They have tried in vain under license laws, and now, when they are beginning to feel relief, and the long-sought results are being experienced, will you take away their only hope? Let it not be said that you turn a deaf ear to the wails of the poor victims of intemperance; the anguishing cries of heart-broken widows and orphans throughout the land. Are you a father, and can you contemplate the ruin of a loved son by intemperance with indifference, or fail to try every means to keep him from temptation? As good citizens, can you fail to give your encouragement to a law that makes a crime of a traffic that is causing nine-tenths of all poverty, wretchedness and crime with which society is cursed?

A license law is a recognition of a great wrong, and an indorsement of crime. Let it not be said that Massachusetts countenances and indorses any law that would tend to increase the degradation that exists within her borders.

Let her guard well the trust that is confided to her care. Let her legislators beware how they repeal a law that is the only bright hope of the nineteenth century. It is a holy trust, which, like the sacred vessels of the Lord, must not be touched with impious hands. When the proud Eastern monarch profaned those sacred vessels, the handwriting appeared upon the wall, and Babylon and Belshazzar were no more.

Let us cling to this blessed law as to the ark of our safety. Our noblest sons testify that it is fraught with more home comforts and substantial prosperity than any edict, ordination or legislative Act that can be pointed to in the whole history of man. Its benefits and blessings are on record, and constitute the brightest page in the history of this Commonwealth. Let one and all rally around the banner of prohibition, march with firmness and determination to battle for the right. Fight hard and valiantly for your homes and your firesides, your loved ones and suffering humanity, and victory shall be yours.

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